

A GIRL OF THE LIMBERLOST

By GENE STRAITON-PORTER

Copyright, 1909, by Doubleday, Page & Co

SYNOPSIS

Although a good scholar, Elnora Comstock, entering high school, is abashed by her country dress. She needs \$30 for books and tuition fees. Her mother is unsympathetic, and Elnora tells her troubles to Wesley Sinton, an old neighbor.

When Elnora was born her father was drowned in a swamp, embittering her mother's life. Elnora determines to raise money by gathering forest specimens. The Sintons buy clothes for her.

Elnora, getting her books cheaply, finds a market with the Bird Woman for butternuts, Indian relics, etc.

Mrs. Comstock's devotion to her husband's memory will not permit her to sell trees or have oil wells dug on her land. The Sintons bring Elnora new clothing.

Elnora is delighted with her outfit. Her mother says she must pay for it. Wesley and Margaret Sinton discuss the girl's affairs.

Pete Corson, a Limberlost frequenter, warns Elnora not to visit the Limberlost at night or go far into the swamp at any time.

(Continued from last week.)

He slouched down the road, occasionally feeling the size of the roll he had not taken time to count. He chuckled frequently.

"Feels fat enough to pay," he whispered. "Bill, I beat you just about seven minutes."

The attic was too long, the light too near the other end, and the cabin stood much too far back from the road. He could see nothing, although he climbed the fence and walked back opposite the window. He knew Mrs. Comstock was probably awake and that she some-



He Was Within a Few Feet of the Girl.

times went to the swamp behind her home at night. At times a cry went up from that locality that paralyzed any one near or sent them fleeing as if for life. He did not care to cross behind the cabin. He returned to the road, passed and again climbed the fence. Opposite the west window he could see Elnora. She sat before a small table reading from a book between two candles. Her hair fell in a bright sheen around her, and with one hand she lightly shook and tossed it as she studied. The man stood out in the night and watched.

For a long time a leaf turned occasionally and the hair drying went on. The man drew nearer. The picture grew more beautiful as he approached. He could not see as well as he desired, for the screen was of white mosquito netting, and it angered him. He cautiously crept closer. The elevation shut off his view. Then he remembered the great willow tree shading the well and branching across the window at the west end of the cabin. From childhood Elnora had stepped from the sill to a limb and slid down the slanting trunk of the tree. He reached it and noiselessly swung himself up. Three steps out on the big limb the man shuddered. He was within a few feet of the girl.

Elnora closed the book and laid it aside. She picked up a towel and, turning the gathered ends of her hair, rubbed them across it and, dropping the towel on her lap, tossed the hair again. Then she sat in deep thought. By and by words began to come softly. Near as he was the man could not hear at first. He bent closer and listened intently.

"—ever could be so happy," murmured the soft voice. "The dress is so pretty, such shoes, the coat and everything. I won't have to be ashamed again, not ever again, for the Limberlost is full of precious moths, and I can always collect them. The Bird Woman will

buy more tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. When they are all gone I can spend every minute gathering cocoons and hunting other things I can sell. Oh, thank God for my precious, precious money! Why, I didn't pray in vain after all! I thought when I asked the Lord to hide me, there in that big hall, that he wasn't doing it because I wasn't covered from sight that instant. But I'm hidden now; I feel that." Elnora lifted her eyes to the beams above her. "I don't know much about praying properly," she muttered, "but I do thank you, Lord, for hiding me in your own time and way."

Her face was so bright that it shone with a white radiance. Two big tears welled from her eyes and rolled down her smiling cheeks. "Oh, I do feel that you have hidden me," she breathed. Then she blew out the lights, and the little wooden bed creaked under her weight.

Pete Corson dropped from the limb and found his way to the road. He stood still a long time, then started back to the Limberlost. A tiny point of light flashed in the region of the case. He stopped with an oath.

"Another hound trying to steal from a girl," he exclaimed. "But it's likely he thinks if he gets anything it will be from a woman who can afford it, as I did."

He went on, but beside the fences and very cautiously.

"Swamp seems to be alive tonight," he muttered. "That's three of us out."

He entered a deep place at the north-west corner, sat on the ground, and, taking a pencil from his pocket, tore a leaf from a little notebook and laboriously wrote a few lines by the light he carried. Then he went back to the region of the case and waited.

Before his eyes swept the vision of the slender white creature with tossing hair. He smiled and worshiped it until a distant rooster faintly announced dawn.

Then he unlocked the case again and replaced the money, laid the note upon it and went back to concealment, where he remained until Elnora came down the trail in the morning, looking very lovely in her new dress and hat.

She had had a great struggle with her hair. It crinkled, billowed and shone, and she could not avoid seeing the becoming frame it made around her face. But in deference to her mother's feelings the girl set her teeth and bound her hair close to her head with a shoestring. "Not to be changed at the case," she told herself.

That her mother was watching she was unaware. Just as she picked up the beautiful brown ribbon Mrs. Comstock spoke.

"You had better let me tie that. You can't reach behind yourself and do it right."

Elnora gave a little gasp. Her mother never before had proposed to do anything for the girl that by any possibility she could do herself. Her heart quaked at the thought of how her mother would arrange that bow, but Elnora dared not refuse. The offer was too precious. It might never be made again.

"Oh, thank you!" said the girl, and, sitting down, she held out the ribbon. Her mother stood back and looked at her critically.

"You haven't got that like Mag Sinton had it last night," she announced. "You little idiot! You've tried to plaster it down to suit me, and you missed it. I liked it away better as Mag fixed it after I saw it. You didn't look so peeled."

When Elnora looked in the glass the bow was perfectly tied, and how the gold tone of the brown did match the luster of the shining hair! Just then Wesley Sinton came to the door.

"Good morning," he cried heartily. "Elnora, you look a picture. My, but you're sweet. If any of them city boys get sassy you tell your Uncle Wesley and he'll horsewhip them. Here's your Christmas present from me." He handed Elnora the leather lunch box, with her name carved across the strap in artistic lettering.

"Oh, Uncle Wesley!" and that was all Elnora could say.

"Your Aunt Maggie filled it for me for a starter," he said. "Now, if you are ready I'm going to drive past your way and you can ride almost to Onabasha with me and save the new shoes that much."

Elnora slipped the strap and turned back the lid. This disclosed the knife, fork, napkins and spoon, the milk flask and the interior packed with dainty sandwiches wrapped in tissue paper, and the little compartments for meat, salad and the custard cup.

"Oh, mother!" cried Elnora. "Oh, mother, isn't it fine? What made you think of it, Uncle Wesley? How will I ever thank you? No one will have a finer lunch box than I. Oh, I do thank you. That's the nicest gift I ever had. How I love Christmas in September."

"It's a mighty handy thing," assented Mrs. Comstock, taking in every detail with sharp eyes. "I guess you are glad now you went and helped Mag and Wesley when you could, Elnora?"

"Deedy, yes," laughed Elnora, "and I'm going again first time they have a big day if I stay out of school to do it."

"You'll do no such thing," said the delighted Sinton. "Come now, if you're going!"

"If I ride can you spare me time to run into the swamp to my box just a minute?" asked Elnora.

The light she had seen the previous night troubled her.

"Sure," said Wesley largely. He was having such a good time nothing could hurry him. So they drove away and left a white faced woman watching them from the door, her heart just a little sorer than usual.

"I'd give a pretty to hear what he'll say to her," she said bitterly. "Al-

ways sticking in, always doing things I can't ever afford. Where on earth did he get that thing and what did it cost?"

CHAPTER VII.

Wherein Elnora Receives a Warning and Billy Appears on the Scene.

WHEN Mrs. Comstock entered the cabin and began the day's work, but mingled with the brooding bitterness of her soul was the vision of a sweet young face, glad with a gladness never before seen on it, and over and over she repeated, "I wonder what he'll say to her?"

What he said was that she looked as fresh and sweet as a posy and to be careful not to step in the mud or scratch her shoe when she went to the case.

Elnora found her key and opened the door. Not where she had placed it, but conspicuously in front lay her little heap of bills and a crude scrawl of writing beside it. Elnora picked up the note in astonishment.

"dere Elnora, the lord amighty is hiding you all right done you ever dout it this money of yours was took for some time las nite but it is returned with intres for god sake done ever come to the swamp at nite or late evain or mornin or far in any time sompin worse an you know could sit you A FRIEND."

Elnora began to tremble. She hastily glanced about. The damp earth before the case had been trodden by large, roughly shod feet. She caught up the money and the note, thrust them into her guppie, locked the case and ran for the road.

She was so breathless and her face so white Sinton noticed it.

"What in the world's the matter, Elnora?" he asked as he helped her into the carriage.

"I am half afraid," she panted. "Tut, tut, child!" said Wesley Sinton. "Nothing in the world to be afraid of. What happened?"

"Uncle Wesley," said Elnora. "I had more money than I brought home last night, and I put it in my case. Some one has been there. The ground is all trampled, and they left this note."

"And took your money, I'll wager," said Sinton angrily.

"No," answered Elnora. "Read the note and, oh, Uncle Wesley, tell me what it means!"

Sinton's face was a study. "I don't know what it means," he said. "Only one thing is clear. It means some beast who doesn't really want to harm you has got his eye on you and he is telling you plain as he can not to give him a chance. You got to keep along the roads, in the open, and not let the biggest moth that ever flew toll you out of hearing of us or your mother. It means that, plain and distinct."

"Just when I can sell them; just when everything is so lovely on account of them. I can't—I can't stay away from the swamp. The Limberlost is going to buy the books, the clothes, pay the tuition and even start a college fund. I just can't."

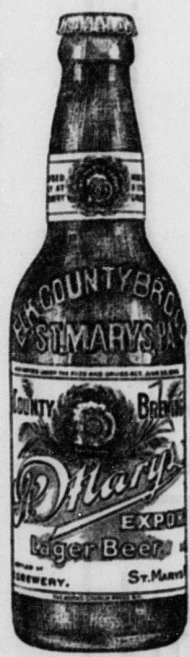
"You've got to," said Sinton. "This is plain enough. You go far in the swamp at your own risk, even in daylight."

"Uncle Wesley," said the girl in a whisper. "last night before I went to bed I was so happy I tried to pray, and I thanked God for hiding me 'under the shadow of his wing.' But how in the world could any one know it?"

(Continued on page 7, Col. 1.)

St. Mary's Beer.

The sunshine of lager beer satisfaction radiates from every bottle of ELK COUNTY BREWING COMPANY'S EXPORT. Every glass is a spark-exquisite taste any brewer's sibly create. Our ment is equipped latest mechanical and sanitary de-the art of brew-recently installed a ment ranking Our sanitary ilizing the bottles filled, and the of pasteurizing has been auto-guarantees the our product. We at the brewery tles, as exposure to light injures flavor.



Elk County Brewing Company
ST. MARYS, PENNSYLVANIA

The Pennsylvania State College.

The : Pennsylvania : State : College

EDWIN ERLE SPARKS, Ph.D., LL. D., PRESIDENT.

Established and maintained by the joint action of the United States Government and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

FIVE GREAT SCHOOLS—Agriculture, Engineering, Liberal Arts, Mining, and Natural Science, offering thirty-six courses of four years each—Also courses in Home Economics, Industrial Art and Physical Education—TUITION FREE to both sexes; incidental charges moderate.

First semester begins middle of September; second semester the first of February; Summer Session for Teachers about the third Monday of June of each year. For catalogue, bulletins, announcements, etc., address

57-26

THE REGISTRAR, State College, Pennsylvania.

Dry Goods, Etc.

LYON & COMPANY.

Christmas Suggestions.

Our stock was never so complete with Christmas Gifts as this season.

FURS.

Everything in Fur Sets for Ladies, Misses and Children. Also single Muffs.

SILKS.

If you are giving Silks, buy them here. All the newest shades in Charmeuse Crepe Meteors, Silk Crepe de Chines, Marquissettes, Brocades, Messalines, Habutal, Satins and Taffetas.

NEEDLEWORK.

This department is laden with excellent Christmas ideas. What nicer gift than a Hand embroidered Scarf or Centrepiece. Everything new and dainty in white, ecru and colors.

NECKWEAR.

Neckwear Suggestions which must appeal to all who wish to give a dainty gift. Collar and Cuff Sets in lace and embroidery. New effects in Stocks, Jabots and Bows. These Bows are especially attractive for the price. Men's Silk Knitted Neckwear in all the new styles and colorings.

HOSIERY.

Woman's Ingrain pure thread Silk Stockings, in medium and light weights. These Stockings are excellent values; 50c. to \$1.00, in black, white and tan.

KNIT GOODS.

The finest hand-knitted Wool Garments made, including Sweaters for Men, Women and Children. Baby Sacques, Aviation Caps, Gloves, Mittens and Toques.

HANDKERCHIEFS.

Ladies' all linen, hand-embroidered Handkerchiefs, from 15c. up. All Linen initial Handkerchiefs from 10c. up. Children's Cotton Handkerchiefs from 15c. a dozen up.

A handsome line of Bath Robe Blankets in exclusive patterns. Japanese Silks in all colors. A complete line of Crepes in plain colors and with side bands for Kimonos.

UMBRELLAS.

We have on display a fine line of new Umbrellas for Men, Women and Children, in silk and gloria.

LEATHER GOODS.

Hand Bags, Purses and Suit Cases, in all shapes, and at very low prices.

Special Reductions on all "La Vogue" Coats and Suits. Christmas shoppers can make a dollar go farther here than elsewhere. Shop Early. Shop Here.

Lyon & Co. Bellefonte

Shoes.

Shoes.

Yeager's Shoe Store

Fitzezy

The Ladies' Shoe

that Cures Corns

Sold only at

Yeager's Shoe Store,

Bush Arcade Building, BELLEFONTE, PA.